

By: Coleman

H.B. No. 3493

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the creation of the employee wellness program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Subchapter V to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER V. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM

Sec. 161.601. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "department" means the Department of State Health Services.

Sec. 161.602. CREATION OF MODEL PROGRAM. (a) The department shall develop for use by private employers a model statewide wellness program to improve the health and wellness of employees. The wellness program may include:

(1) education that targets the most costly or prevalent health care claims, including information addressing stress management, nutrition, healthy eating habits, alcohol and drug abuse, physical activity, disease prevention, and smoking cessation;

(2) the dissemination or use of available health risk assessment tools and programs, including surveys that identify an employee's risk level for health-related problems and programs that suggest to employees methods for minimizing risks;

(3) the development of strategies for the promotion of health, nutritional, and fitness-related resources in the workplace;

1 (4) the development and promotion of environmental
2 change strategies that integrate healthy behaviors and physical
3 activity, including recommending healthy food choices in snack
4 bars, vending machines, and employer-run cafeterias; and

5 (5) optional incentives to encourage participation in
6 the wellness program, including providing flexibility in employee
7 scheduling to allow for physical activity and participation in the
8 wellness program and coordinating discounts with gyms and fitness
9 centers across the state.

10 (b) The department shall:

11 (1) coordinate with other agencies that administer a
12 health benefits program under Chapter 1551, Insurance Code, or
13 Chapter 664, Government Code, as necessary to develop the model
14 wellness program and prevent duplication of efforts;

15 (2) maintain a set of Internet links to health
16 resources for use by private employers and employees;

17 (3) design an outreach campaign to educate private
18 employers and employees about health and fitness-related
19 resources, including available exercise facilities, online tools,
20 and health and fitness-related organizations; and

21 (4) study the implementation and participation rates
22 of wellness programs implemented by private employers and report
23 the findings to the legislature biennially.

24 (c) The department may assist a private employer in
25 establishing employee wellness demonstration projects that
26 incorporate best practices for encouraging employee participation
27 and the achievement of wellness benefits. An employee wellness

1 demonstration project may implement strategies to optimize the
2 return of employer investment in employee wellness, including
3 savings in direct health care costs and savings from preventing
4 conditions and diagnoses through better employee wellness.

5 SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2011.